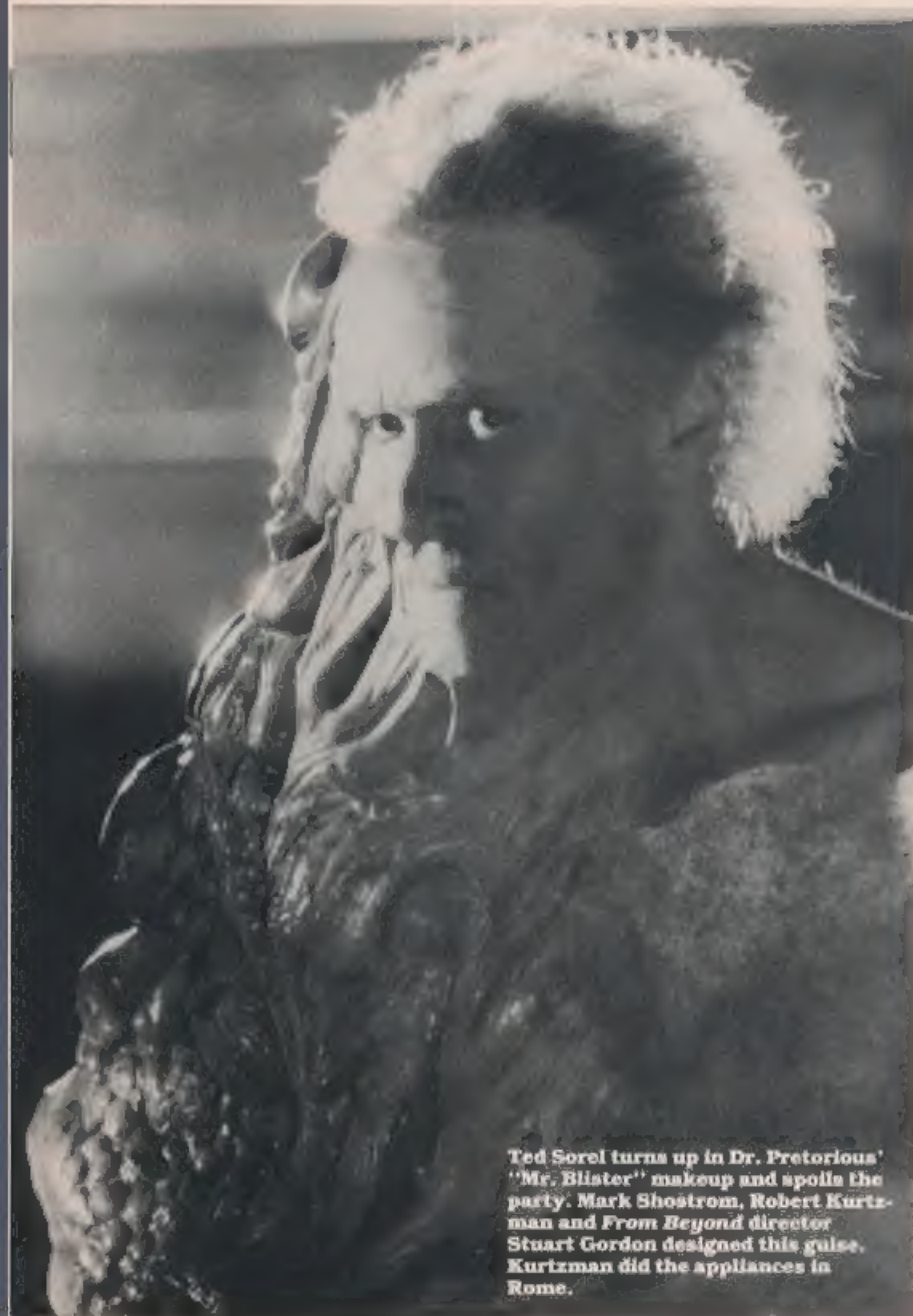




Ted Sorel turns up in Dr. Pretorius' "Mr. Blister" makeup and spoils the party. Mark Shostrom, Robert Kurtzman and *From Beyond* director Stuart Gordon designed this guise. Kurtzman did the appliances in Rome.

At the end of David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*, Max Renn commits suicide while declaring, "Long live the New Flesh." Since then, few horror films have brought new life to flesh. During 1986, however, one movie tried to take that maxim further than ever before: Stuart Gordon's *From Beyond*.

This was the transformation movie of the year: characters metamorphosed all over the place, flesh peeled, heads split open, muscles writhed, slime oozed. Nothing was the same by the picture's end. As Gordon said during shooting, "We've got enough effects in this film for four movies." Quite appropriately, he also had four FX crews working on the project.

John Buechler has already touched upon his involvement (*Fango* #55). The other FX stars were Anthony Dublin and John Naulin, the heroes of *Re-Animator*'s gore fest, and the always busy Mark Shostrom, here making his first foray into the weird worlds of H.P. Lovecraft.

Special FX are seldom straightforward; *From Beyond*, in utilizing several groups of technical artists, was a challenge for all involved. Each outfit had its own area of responsibility. Various overlaps complicated matters further. "I was kind of like an axle in a wheel," explains Anthony Dublin, "so everyone had one point to come to."

Being that axle was of equal importance with Dublin's other functions as supervisor of physical FX and advisor for the staging of scenes that required post-production FX work. "I also coordinated the pyrotechnics, particularly the destruction of the Pretorius home at the climax," he adds. "That was probably the easiest gag to arrange. We set the charges, wired them, and just blew that sucker up. The real rough stuff was the big monsters. We—my wife Therese and I—additionally handled the insect scene and the wire rigs required for the lamprey eel sequence in the basement. Oh, and we shouldn't forget to mention the slime pumping."

"We had an air mortar (a pneumatic bucket like a big Hudson sprayer) so we could push gallons of the stuff through hoses. It was tested out by shooting snot across

Photo: Copyright 1986 Empire Entertainment

THE BOYS **From BEYOND**

By PHILIP NUTMAN

The many merry FX men of Stuart Gordon's creature feature reveal who did what.



Pineal Photo: Courtesy John Neulin

Makeup trooper Jeffery Combs sports MTSD's pineal attachment and prosthetics.

the studio parking lot," he laughs, "and we were very successful at hitting cars."

"There were about 157 separate items in all that required effects in *From Beyond*," Dublin continues, "I had to generate a breakdown to work out who was doing what and what needed to be done. That's one of the major problems on this kind of picture. During pre-production, everyone was working out of a different shop in L.A., so communication was very important. The coordinator of that was Michael Muscal, who had been production manager on *Re-Animator*. He deserves praise for making it all run smoothly."

"On *Re-Animator*, the effects budget was \$50,000; on *From Beyond*, it was \$150,000. It turned out to be 10 times the work, three times the budget, with four times the people," Dublin reveals.

Despite the enormous pressures

of *Re-Animator*, it was an important project for Dublin. "That, basically, was my picture as far as effects go. I did all the design work," he admits, "I was in right from the start. They had a script and a group of guys; we had a meeting with Stuart and [producer] Brian Yuzna, who said, 'Do you think we can do it low budget?' Well, I said, 'Yes, we've got a bunch of people ready to work on this.'"

Dublin's interest in the field was triggered, as with many other professionals, by Ray Harryhausen's *Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* and a reissue of *King Kong*. He followed the home movie route, made monsters in the family garage and experimented. By the early 1970s, he was introduced to stop-motion wizard David Allen. Dublin, a theater projectionist at the time and sick of watching other people's movies, joined Allen's Cascade com-

Shostrom's studio built the Pretorious monster in California, then shipped it to Empire's Rome studio. The creation (seen here sans left arm) featured a radio-controlled cable head. Shostrom sculpted and painted the third stage mechanical head (inset), and David Kindlon provided the mechanics.





More Than Skin Deep's completed lamprey eel takes a breather before swallowing Crawford.



For some shots, Sorel squeezed his head into Shostrom's mammoth Pretorius suit. David Kindlon handled the complicated animatronics, while Robert Kurtzman led Shostrom's FX team.

pany, which was then involved with making Pillsbury Doughboy and Green Giant commercials. "In those days, if you weren't doing advertisements, you weren't making a living," Doublin recalls.

Following a few years working part-time for Cascade, Doublin left to assist Greg Jein with the miniatures for Steven Spielberg's 1941, returned to Cascade, then went on to help out on the "Jews in Space" sequence of Mel Brooks' *History of the World, Part One*. Later, Doublin formed the Magic Lantern company with Bob Greenberg (who was associate producer on *Re-Animator*), doing more commercials and supplying FX for a few movies. Greenberg knew Stuart Gordon and one thing led to another, that other being *Re-Animator*.

John Naulin, on the other hand, hails from a more unusual background. Like Doublin, he is assisted by his wife, Shayna. "I started out studying theater in Phoenix, Arizona, and was a contract player as a kid," Naulin states. "After that, I went through theater training in high school. I started doing makeup more as an avocation rather than a vocation. I just really loved it. Then, I began building haunted houses, which caught on in Phoenix. Did them for nine years. The final year, when I was 18, attracted 3,500 people, and I was assisted by 104 people. So, I got into monsters through Halloween events, and general makeup through plays—I worked on 70 in eight years."

Naulin started doing prosthetics back in 1974. Then, he got married, moved to L.A., and did nightclub work as a performer. He didn't like it, so he quit to join the Universal Studios Tour. Two and a half years of this led to Naulin's being hired by Don Post Studios as their manager

Naulin's team supplied Ken Foree with his bug-bit body. (Vestron released *From Beyond* on video—the R version—in April).



of research and development, creating their "Cast of Characters" range (now discontinued) in the process. Consequently, Naulin had the opportunity to interview many top makeup artists like Ben ('58 Fly) Nye, Sr. and John Chambers (*Planet of the Apes* Oscar winner).

During his three-year tenure at Don Post, Naulin and his special projects crew created the barely-glimpsed creature in Wes Craven's *Deadly Blessing*, 156 stillsuits for *Dune* and worked on over 50 assignments. Naulin left Post in 1983, wanting to devote more time to *More Than Skin Deep*, the company that he founded in 1977.

From Beyond rates as one of the most exciting projects that MTSD has been involved with. "Primarily, we were assigned the pineal effects. We also did what could be called the secondary creatures, the non-Pretorians related stuff," Naulin elaborates. "The giant lamprey eel, for example, that sucks off Jeffrey Combs' hair. Also, the pseudo-jellyfish and wriggling snake-eels that are present when the Resonator is switched on.

"There was an interesting crossover since part of those effects are optical, created by using rod puppets in a tank of water, matted in to give them the necessary degree of fluidity of motion. Tony Doubin developed the water aspect. John Criswell and I built the snake-eels and jellyfish.

"We used different puppets on set for the biting sequences," Naulin continues. "There were two of each: one fully mechanically and radio controlled, the other physically operated in part. Those were less sophisticated stunt versions.

"We had a problem coming up with a design that would work with an optical that obviously would not be added until much later," Naulin observes. "The eels used out of the tank were different because the mechanisms had to be covered up, made to look like innards. For the close-ups, one of the main elements used were latex condoms, which were thin and flexible yet translucent enough for the back-lighting to show through."

The MTSD crew additionally provided the S & M and splatter material, subsequently removed for the R-rated release: whipping, nipple spiking, tongue piercing, eyeball sucking, and brain eating. Of course, there were basic wounds—cuts, bruises, burns—but also Bubba Brownlee's (Ken Foree) death scene when he gets eaten by insects. Greg Johnson, along with the rest of the crew, built Bubba's lower body,

while John Criswell sculpted the torso; Anthony and Therese Doubin created the tiny insects.

"Those 'insects' were really millions of polystyrene balls," explains Doubin, "blown around by a huge fan. Actually, one of the crew kidded me that Stuart wanted tiny eyes painted on each ball. I said fine, get me 500 prisoners," he laughs.

Both FX supervisors consider *From Beyond* to be a good test of their skills, one they enjoyed. However, an aspect of Italy neither found pleasant was the sub-zero temperatures experienced during shooting as Rome was plunged into a rare, deep snowfall. This aside, Naulin and Doubin praise the Italian crew who provided their backup.

Mark Shostrom luckily missed the bad weather, but remains frustrated that he could not supervise his creations on set due to his *Evil Dead II* responsibilities. In his place, he sent animatronics expert David Kindlon and makeup artist/technician Robert Kurtzman. "I was quite distraught that I couldn't get over to monitor what went on," confesses Shostrom. "But Robert is the best person I know to oversee that kind of situation. He's an excellent artist, as is David Kindlon. With him troubleshooting the mechanics, I could sleep nights. I'm enormously pleased with the way it turned out on screen."

Shostrom joined the production during its early inception. "I had lots of discussions with Stuart and showed him my sketches, which were quite surrealistic monsters. But it basically came down to having a design because we suddenly got a green light, so I sculpted a couple of maquettes, small sculptures for the final creature, and the Pretorious monster.

"We started sculpting those, then John Buechler returned from Italy," Shostrom continues, "so he really had to follow my lead with the look of things. His creatures were pretty different, like the shrimp creature. Stylistically, they don't clash, and we were on the same wavelength. But it's hard to explain how exactly they evolved. The process really occurred by itself."

According to Shostrom, Dennis Paoli's screenplay was open concerning how the creatures looked. "Stuart has an artistic background," he adds, "so he was able to come up with some great storyboards showing what he wanted, like Mr. Bubble (the first-stage Pretorious transformation). He had seen some sketches I'd done for a film a few years back where a person



Crawford's "third eye" stares back at Dr. Roberta Bloch (Carolyn Purdy-Gordon). Combs wears a pineal headpiece sculpted by John Naulin.

had a large membranous sac attached to his neck, an idea which he liked. He did some illustrations that took it further. So, Stuart had much to do with the final image."

As for the final creature seen in *From Beyond*, Shostrom tried to go beyond his budget. As he puts it: "We were pretty ambitious there. I told them what it would take. Brian Yuzna said Empire couldn't afford that. We tried anyway. I sculpted the maquette of the creature, trying to give it a look that was unusual, yet would fit within the story. Creating it really drained my budget, but the key thing was the animatronics designed and built by David Kindlon, who really bit off a lot to chew on that one. He had to make radio-controlled heads and arms all by himself, although his work was essential to the creature's success.

"The reason why we all went full steam ahead on this film," he relates, "was simply because it was such a neat project. That, and the desire to create a really memorable monster, to make it better than it should have been on the given budget."

The Pretorious creature emerged as the end result: big, complicated, difficult to manage due to its size. "We need several things we hadn't

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RAIMI

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Raimi: I was in college studying literature and history, and of course forestalling a career, trying to make as many movies as I could. I was expecting to drag out my college years to about eight, then I'd take a real job doing something else. And then Rob said, "Why don't we make a feature film, since we seem to be doing it in Super-8?" I thought, "The poor sap doesn't realize it isn't possible. I'll play his game until he finds out, because I'd hate to be the one to say no." But we talked about it more and more over long nights in the apartment. Finally, we got evicted because we were playing our Super-8 movies too loud. It was either find another apartment, or go into the movie business. In that town, it was easier to go into the movie business.

Fang: Did you always want to be a filmmaker?

Raimi: I wanted to be a meteorologist in the seventh grade. I took a meteorology course. Then, I wanted to be an airplane pilot. Then, I took one of those pre-SATs in junior high school; they told me to forget about it, that I should be a handyman, a guy who troubleshoots washing machines. I didn't want to fix washing machines, so I started making Super-8 movies, but I never thought you could really do it as a profession. It never entered my mind that it was possible.

Fang: What's next?

Raimi: I have a commitment to write two scripts with [Blood Simple's] Joel and Ethan Coen. One's called *The Hudsucker Proxy*, which Joel is planning to direct and Ethan will produce. It's a big business 1950s comedy and the best script that I've ever had the opportunity to work on. The other is called *We Saps Three*, which is a comedy that we're writing together.

Fang: It sounds like your future directions may not be in the horror/splatter genre.

Raimi: I'm very happy with any good script, whether it's a love story, drama, anything. It would be a lot of fun to try a comedy. But I'm very happy with horror movies, also. Because of their strange nature, they allow you to be very stylish and play some games. They really open up the opportunity to make the most of film: You can play with sound, you can take it anywhere. You can experiment with camera angles, lighting techniques, and it allows you great freedom to really explore the possibility of film.

BERNI

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"I love it!" he applauds. "It's a night-and-day difference from what we did. In just a few years, they've changed him so completely, so delightfully. I really enjoy Moore's work a lot; he's one of the best writers around."

When Wrightson left *Swamp Thing* in the early '70s, he also took a hiatus from color comics. Having already worked on a short-lived clone of *Creepy* and *Eerie*, he decided to tackle the real thing and accepted a job offer from magazine publisher Jim Warren, a situation that proved to be an ideal one.

"I had absolute, total freedom! I could do anything I wanted," Wrightson remembers. "Warren was just a complete pussycat with me. He was hip, smart, funny and just a total joy. He never gave me a moment's trouble. And I tell this to other people he's worked with, and they just scratch their heads and say, 'We're not talking about the same man.'"

Creepy veteran Wrightson recently returned to the world of color comics. Last year, needing some money and overcoming his hatred of superheroes, he drew a Marvel Comics graphic novel that plunged Spider-Man into a mystical dimension populated by hideous creatures. This year, he completed another graphic novel featuring the incredible Hulk and *The Fantastic Four's Thing*, a project he refused to accept unless Marvel met his one demand.

"My condition for doing this one last super-hero book was not having to draw a single human being in the whole thing," he explains. "I said, 'OK, I'll do something with the Hulk and the Thing.' Sure, they're superheroes, but they're monsters. So writer Jim Starlin and I put them on an alien planet or some other dimension because I didn't want to draw any people, just monsters from cover to cover."

Currently, Wrightson is spending some time raising his family, sculpting and doing painting while he tries to re-examine his career in comics. But regardless of whether he chooses to return to the comic page, Wrightson certainly wants to continue to create new cinematic horrors.

"I would love to do more work in the movies. If I could do that and still live in upstate New York, that would be great. No way am I going to Hollywood!" Says Berni Wrightson. "I know if I was on the West Coast, I'd be working in the movies, but my God, who wants to live in California?"

BEYOND

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done before to make him work," Shostrom confides. "Like, 'How do we make the mold for this huge creature?' We couldn't do a standard mold and had to get a guy to make fiberglass molds. And we talked to Stan Winston's people about injection systems for foaming up the creature. Not just because it was so large, but because it was such an odd shape. Winston's crowd had come up with a marvelous system for injecting polyurethane foam for *Invaders From Mars*, but their monsters were primarily round, whereas ours had a seven-piece mold that was totally convoluted. Figuring that out was quite a head-scratcher."

Aside from the shrimp creature, John Buechler's team was assigned the transformational tasks for Dr. Pretorius. Since Buechler was busy, he was not able to stay in Rome for the duration of principal photography. Like Shostrom, he had to delegate responsibility to others in the Mechanical and Makeup Imagery crew, in this case William Butler and Michael Deak.

"For us," says the laidback Deak, "we were called on to do a lot of puppeteering." Deak is well-rounded, though, proficient in every aspect of special FX makeup. "For the most part, the creatures were constructed in L.A. We were sent out to oversee the effects translated onto the screen. I did a great deal of rigging and operating."

Butler handled a fair amount of appliance work under Buechler's watchful eye. "I can do that kind of stuff quite easily, but my strongest point is organization," reveals Butler, adding, "I find makeup too messy to enjoy. I'd rather be on the other side of production."

When not monitoring their own work, Butler and Deak would assist Kindlon and Kurtzman, a situation both Shostrom crew members are keen to emphasize. "There was a tremendous amount of cooperation on this film," Kindlon notes. "I don't recall any ego clashes or real differences of opinion, and I think the end result, what's on screen, shows that."

Kurtzman concurs: "In one respect, you could say it was like having two groups work on one film. David and I had worked with Mike Deak before on *Day of the Dead*; John Naulin and Tony Dublin had worked together before, so that was the way the duties overlapped. Still, when the need arose, everyone pulled together."